DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 440 046 SO 031 752

AUTHOR	Frese, Millie K., Ed.
TITLE	Home and Family Life.
INSTITUTION	Iowa State Historical Society, Iowa City.
ISSN	ISSN-0278-0208
PUB DATE	1996-00-00
NOTE	34p.; Theme issue. Published Quarterly. Photographs may not reproduce clearly.
AVAILABLE FROM	Goldfinch, State Historical Society of Iowa, 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, IA 52240-1806 ($10 for 4 issues). Tel: 319-335-3916.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Guides - Classroom - Learner (051)
JOURNAL CIT	Goldfinch: Iowa History for Young People; v17 n3 Spr 1996
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Built Environment; Culture; Elementary Education; Family Characteristics; *Family History; *Family Life; *Family (Sociological Unit); Heritage Education; Historiography; Local History; Primary Sources; Research Tools; *Social History; Social Studies; *State History
IDENTIFIERS	Historical Background; *Iowa

ABSTRACT

The "Goldfinch" is a magazine that introduces children to different aspects of Iowa History. Each issue contains articles to provide in-depth knowledge of a topic about Iowa. The focus of this issue is homes and family life in Iowa history. Selections address what has been important to Iowa's families over time and what homes were like before electricity, indoor plumbing, and telephones were introduced to the state. Sod houses and log cabins from the early history are discussed. Family traditions and village, farm life, and a small town at the turn of the century are described from the perspectives of a Native American. Young readers and writers share impressions of home life and what constitutes a family. Instructions for building a sod house and making a handkerchief toy are included. A series of photographs from different periods of Iowa history pose questions to help students discover how earlier Iowans lived and what they valued. A short story and several activities help students explore Iowan history. One article includes excerpts from a young boy's diary recounting the cold winter of 1894-95 and how families worked and played together. (EH)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 440 046

Home and Family Life

The Goldfinch

Iowa History for Young People

Volume 17, Number 3 Spring 1996

SO 031 752

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D. Gore

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to impro e reproduction quality

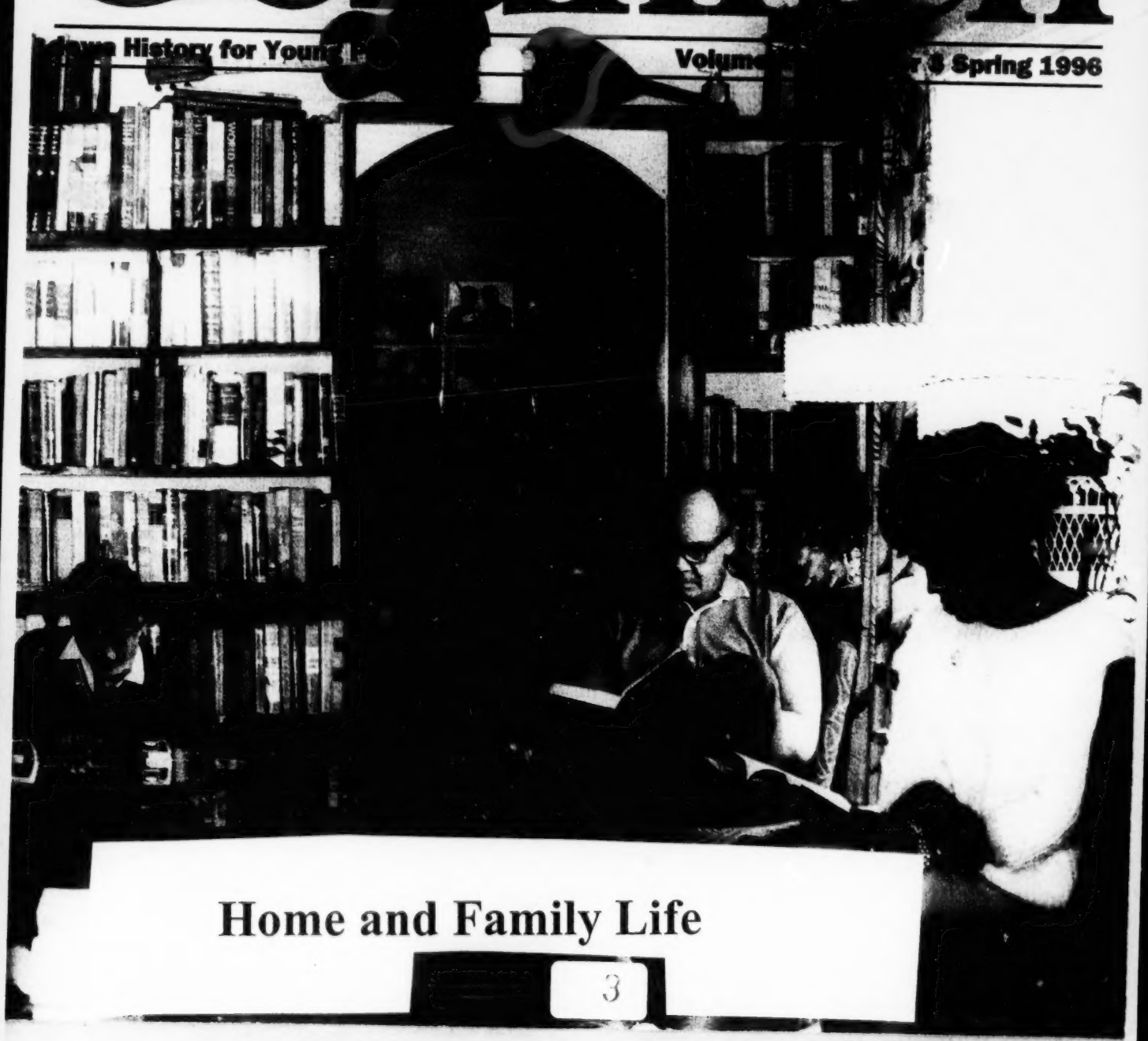
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

2

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE Goldfinch

Iowa History for Young [illegible] Volume [illegible] Spring 1996



Home and Family Life

3

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

There's no place like home

You may be familiar with the old saying, "There's no place like home." Is it true? We turned to two Iowa kids to find out.

Twelve-year-old Effie Maloney moved to Denison, Iowa from Illinois in 1875. Some might say that Effie left her heart in Illinois. In her diary, she wrote about how homesick she was for her native state. Although she made many new Iowa friends and corresponded regularly with old friends, she missed Illinois terribly.

"I want to go back to Illinois so bad that it seems to me sometimes as if I would go wild," she wrote on February 18, 1878. "Oh that only I could go. Our folks know that I want to go but they don't know one quarter how bad I want to go."

courtesy Nathaniel Frazier

Nathaniel Frazier

Almost one hundred and twenty years later, 11-year-old Nathaniel Frazier of Sioux City also has some pretty strong feelings about home. Although Nathaniel, like Effie, has moved from place to place, the feeling of home and the importance of family stay the same.

"Home is a loving feeling. . . . it makes me feel comfortable because I know it's a place where I can always go," Nathaniel told *The Goldfinch*. "And my family is important because we care about each other and we look out after each other."

This issue of *The Goldfinch* is all about homes and families in Iowa history. You'll learn what has been important to Iowa's families and what homes were like before electricity, indoor plumbing, and telephones came along. You'll find out what it was like to live in a cramped log cabin or a dusty sod house. And we'll introduce you to a few more Iowa kids — like Effie and Nathaniel — who talk about their own homes and families. – *The Editor*

THE Goldfinch
Volume 17, Number 3 • Spring 1996

Winner of a 1995 Parents' Choice Honor Award

Educational Press Association of America member

EDITOR: Amy Ruth
PUBLISHER: Marvin Bergman, Ph.D.
FICTION EDITOR: Steven Blaski
EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS: Michelle Rubin, Linzee Kull McCray, and Bridgett M. Williams
RESEARCHER: Jackie Smetak
PROOFREADER: Claire Dixon
ILLUSTRATION: Mary Moye-Rowley, Iowa City
COVER WRAP DESIGN: Kris Atha, Oskaloosa

CONSULTING EDITORS: Brad Bruning, social studies teacher, Boyer Valley School, Dunlap; Norma Hiles, Lamoni; Dr. Andrejs Plakans, professor of European history, Department of History, Iowa State University, Ames

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: Millie K. Frese, Diana Star Helmer, Sherri Dagel House, Mary T. Brauch Petersen, and Faith Schantz

EDUCATORS' ADVISORY BOARD: Betty Arndt, Greenwood Elementary School, Des Moines; Gary Coffelt, Central Decatur Elementary, Leon; and Linda Vandeventer, Harrison Elementary School, Davenport

CHILDREN'S ADVISORY BOARD: Tiffany Bowers, Dubuque; Heather Harney, Oxford; Jennifer Jirak, Waucoma; Bethany E. Moklestad, Des Moines; Logan Swaim, Iowa City; Trevor Vos, Sioux Center

SPECIAL THANKS TO: The Iowa Sesquicentennial Commission and Coca-Cola Bottlers of Iowa for funding this issue and Johnathan Buffalo, tribal historian, Tama, for his help with the article on pages 4-5.

CREDITS: The characters Wild Rosie and Goldie by SHSI exhibit designer Jerry Brown.

The Goldfinch (ISSN 0278-0208) is published quarterly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, Iowa 52240-1806 (319/335-3916). Second-class postage paid at Iowa City, Iowa. Subscriptions are $10 for four issues. Postmaster: Send address changes to: Carol Carey, subscriptions coordinator, *The Goldfinch*, State Historical Society of Iowa, 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, Iowa 52240-1806. © State Historical Society of Iowa, 1996. No portion of *The Goldfinch* may be reproduced without prior permission except for classroom use.

***The Goldfinch* is also available on cassette tape for the blind, the visually impaired, the physically handicapped, and the learning disabled. For more information contact the Iowa Department for the Blind, 1-800-362-2587. Or write to the Iowa Department for the Blind Library, 524 4th St., Des Moines 50309.**

HISTORY MYSTERY

SHSI (Iowa City)

What am I?

I can be a family's constant companion, but I don't live and breathe. I pass on much knowledge, from recipes to weather predictions and harvesting tips, but I never speak. I can cure colds and other ailments, but I'm no doctor. At the end of each year I am replaced, but I remain a valued member of many families.

What am I? (Turn to page 30 for the answer.)

CONTENTS

Features

There's No Place Like Home	2
Iowa Home Life: Three Views	4
Dear Diary	8
The Changing Home	11
Homes in History	14
Family Groups	18
Passing the Time	19
Round the Family Year	22
Family's Best Friends	24

Departments

History Mystery	3
Activity: Home Work	7
Activity: Diary Detective Game	10
Activity: Build a Sod House	16
Activity: Make a Handkerchief Toy	21
Goldfinch Fiction: *Changes for Anna*	25
Activity: Be a Photo Historian	28
History Makers	29
Answers	30
The Roost	31

On the Cover

The Cecil and Evelyn Reed family of Cedar Rapids relax at home in the 1960s. Credit: Joan Liffring-Zug Collection/SHSI (Iowa City).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

by Amy Rt

Iowa home life: Three views

From a Native American village to a small town, Iowans have kept house in many environments. Their experiences are as diverse as the people who call Iowa home.

Tribal Living

Before European Americans came to Iowa, the land was home to 17 Native American tribes, including the Mesquakie.

In the summer, extended Mesquakie families lived along major rivers in villages of bark-covered houses.

"There were always things going on outside — dances and **lacrosse** games — and for children there were distant cousins and friends to play with," tribal historian Johnathan Buffalo told *The Goldfinch*.

Women and girls planted crops, gathered wild berries, nuts, and roots, and preserved food for the winter. They wove mats and baskets. Men traveled far from home to hunt big game. By 1860, there were no buffalo or elk left in Iowa and hunters had to travel further from their families to find big game.

A Mesquakie family weaves in their wickiup, around 1900.

In the winter, the Mesquakie moved to wickiups, dome-shaped structures covered with reed mats that housed individual families.

"That was the time people made things," Buffalo said. "Men carved spoons and arrow heads. Women taught their daughters how to sew and make things."

Mesquakie also shared stories about tribal and family history. "That was how knowledge was passed to children," Buffalo said.

In the winter, families ate what they saved during the summer, including dried berries, meat, corn, and squash. Men trapped raccoons and beaver for fur and families ate the meat.

In the early 1900s, the government destroyed the last Mesquakie village and forced them to live in government-built homes. Life became more individualized.

lacrosse — a game with sticks and balls

"Before we did things as a tribe," Buffalo said. "We planted at the same time and harvested at the same time. But after [1902] families did things separate. We lost that tribal village life."

Today, the Mesquakie live in modern homes on the Tama settlement and follow modern ways. Some traditional customs of the home are still practiced. Many families maintain a traditional home next to their modern house and live there during the annual Pow Wow each summer. Some still prepare traditional Indian foods over open fires. And storytelling — passing family history down through the generations — is still a vital part of Mesquakie home life.

— with Johnathan Buffalo

On the farm

Iowa's earliest European-American citizens came from eastern states and from European countries. Their homesteads were little more than log cabins. Once families planted and harvested their first crop, they had money for lumber and other supplies. A family then might build a frame house, a barn, and smoke house. Eighteenth- and early 19th-century farm families lived and worked at the same site. Their lives revolved around running the farm.

A farm house had to accommodate the needs of its inhabitants, and farming magazines often published house plans to help people decide what style of home to build. When these plans were too elaborate or too expensive to carry out, farm families followed their own designs.

A farm woman needed a large kitchen and work area to prepare and preserve food. Fruits, vegetables, and home-canned goods were stored in the cellar. A big dining room accommodated the large threshing crews that helped with the harvest each mid-summer. In the evenings, the farm family relaxed in the kitchen. If they had company, they gathered in the parlor.

SHSI (Iowa City)

Iowa farmers take pride in their homes, families, and land. This couple poses outside their home in the 1950s.

Well into the 20th century, children were valuable laborers. Boys helped the men in the fields while girls worked alongside their mothers in the house and garden. Women and girls cooked and preserved food; made, washed, ironed, and mended clothes; and made candles and soap. Both boys

and girls helped care for livestock, hauled water, and chopped wood. Farm chores took priority over recreation and sometimes school!

Beginning in the mid-1900s, the farm was no longer the sole provider for the family. Farm men and women often took jobs off the farm to earn wages. This changed the family farm, and the home life associated with it.

In town

Iowa's early towns were rustic places. Citizens hoped their towns would survive so they worked to attract residents by improving buildings, sidewalks, roads, and services.

In the late-1800s to mid-1900s, Iowa's towns were home to people who provided goods and services to country and town folk alike. Storekeepers, hotel owners, teachers, doctors, lawyers, factory workers, and others lived close to their places of work. Some business owners and their families lived in apartments directly above a store or office.

Most town families grew fruits and vegetables in their gardens and some kept cows, pigs, and chickens to provide milk, meat, and eggs. There were always chores to keep town families busy. Women and girls tended the garden, prepared food, washed and ironed clothes, and cleaned house. Before steam, gas, or electric heat, men and boys chopped wood or hauled coal for the kitchen and parlor stoves. Other chores included pulling weeds, mowing lawns, and taking care of the animals.

Horses, wagons, and buggies stirred up a lot of dust and dirt and splattered it on house and store windows. Poorer families who lived closest to town streets spent a lot of time scrubbing their windows and keeping the outside of their houses clean.

Gordon Kent mows his lawn in DeWitt, Iowa, around 1910.

After the work day was done, town families relaxed. Reading, playing board games and charades, and performing music were popular activities. In the 1920s, radios and **phonographs** entertained families. Social gatherings outside of the home also attracted town dwellers who spent some leisure time out of their homes.

Advances in transportation technology in the 20th century made it possible to live far from the work place. Beginning in the mid-1900s, many city families moved to suburbs (residential areas) and town families moved away from the center of town. Despite the appeal of suburbs, many of Iowa's families continue to live within the boundaries of the state's towns and cities.

phonograph — early record player

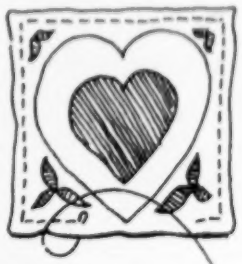
Home Work

Get a head start on your "home" work by completing the phrases below. Each phrase is built around the word "home," only one word is missing from each. It's up to you to fill in the blanks using the clues we have provided. Turn to page 30 for the answers. If all your answers are correct, give yourself an A+!

There's no _____ like home
Dorothy made this phrase famous in the hit movie, *The Wizard of Oz.*

Home, home on the _____, where the deer and the antelope play
This line from a well-known 1860s song spoke of the life of cowboys and pioneers.

Home is where the _____ is
An ancient proverb, this phrase describes an emotion often associated with home and family life.



Home, _____ Home
This is a title of a song written in 1823. The sugary phrase also often appeared in a young girl's needle work sampler that showed off her sewing skills.

When Johnny Comes _____ Home Again
This 1863 song was written during the Civil War. The lyrics tell of the hearty welcome a brave soldier received when he returned home. Iowa sent many young men marching off to war in the 1860s.

Keep the home _____ burning
When their husbands, fathers, and brothers went off to war, women were left behind with this very important task performed at the fireplace or stove. The phrase has come to mean keeping things running smoothly.

Bring home the _____
Today, this phrase means going to work and bringing home a paycheck. It was first used in rural America where fair-goers watched greased-pig contests. Whoever caught the slippery swine took it home from the fair and the above phrase was born.

Activity by Sherri Dagel House • Art by Mary Moye-Rowley

Dear Diary . . .

"The fire had gone out again this morning"

by Faith Schantz

One hundred years ago in Newton, Iowa, my great uncle, Roy Nasmith, kept a diary. In a small brown book, 12-year-old Roy wrote about family life, his friends, going to school, and the church where his father was a minister.

Roy, his younger brother Gussie, and their two little sisters, Vera and Mildred, had to share their parents with the other members of the church. Roy often wrote that Mama and Papa spent the evening at the church, or that he and Gussie were sent upstairs because of a meeting at home. Still, Mama occasionally found time to write for Roy in his diary. (Her handwriting is much neater than his!) And Papa, who was sometimes paid for his work in food instead of money, managed to surprise Roy with a new pair of skates, so he wouldn't have to borrow Gussie's.

As the oldest child in the family, Roy had his own responsibilities, too. He often tended the fire that warmed their home and sometimes baby-sat his two sisters.

Roy's diary tells the story of his life during the cold winter of 1894–1895. His entries provide clues to how families worked and played together in Iowa history.

Photo: Roy Nasmith around the time he wrote his diary. Courtesy F. Schantz.

Nov. 25, 1894

In the morning while I was cleaning out the barn, just before the reading, I let the cow out so I could clean it better, and when I got through I couldn't find the cow. I hunted a long time and at last found her in a yard 1/2 block away.

Jan. 3, 1895

When Gussie got up he told me there was snow on the ground and sure enough, there it was. I swept off the front walks before breakfast.

This noon Mama excused us from our work so that we could play with the sled. After school was out Gussie went out coasting. He was in the pasture where we took our cow this last summer. It was real nice coasting, the best I have had since I can remember. Both of us together tried it but found out to our disadvantage that it wouldn't work. The place we coasted was steep first, then a little level, and then a drop right down, and when we came to that the sled jumped.

Jan. 4, 1895

The fire had gone out again this morning and the bottom part of the

Art by Mary Moye-Rowley

stove fell down to add to the trouble. I didn't get the fire fixed until after [the family] ate and the first bell had pretty near rung.

This noon I went down to see if Eddie Rodgers could go coasting. He said he could come at two o'clock. As I went on my way home I saw a sign "Scarlet Fever" on a house. It was Mr. Brooks' the Methodist Church minister's little and only child. He put a notice in the paper that she was not dangerously sick.

Jan. 5, 1895

We took our bath this morning for we didn't take it last week because Mama was sick. Then when we got through we helped Mama.

After dinner we went out to Mr. Guthrie's. Chester tried his bobsled but it didn't go very good. He dragged it a long ways, and got so tired that we went to the house and got the sleigh and went and got the bob-sled and hitched it on it. I rode behind on the bob-sled on the way to the house. As soon as Chester had unharnessed the horses we went up in the hayloft to play.

We got home after five. Mama had gone to Mr. Loving's at four o'clock to help Mrs. Loving, because Laury Loving and Brady Loving were to be married tonight. Papa stayed with us to supper, and then he had to go. We put the girls to bed at 8 o'clock. We were to get a penny a piece for doing it. Gussie and I read some more in the January St. Nicholas [a popular children's magazine]. Papa let Gussie and I have the St. Nicholas if we read it out loud together. We have got thirteen copies of it that way.

Papa and Mama got home at ten o'clock.

Jan. 6, 1895

The fire for a wonder didn't go out this morning. We went to church and Sunday School as usual. [During afternoon church] we were left alone, and a lot of boys came over. When Mama came she sent them home.

Jan. 7, 1895

This afternoon I pasted my stamps in a little book.

Gussie went out coasting tonight and when he came back, he came with a broken sled. He broke it going over a rock. He said he wished he hadn't went tonight.

Jan. 8, 1895

I built the kitchen fire at 7:30 a.m.

The teacher gave me my examination paper in Grammar. She marked me 90% but I think it ought to have been 70%. I will see her about it.

Papa has made an arrangement with me to let me read, or fuss with stamps, etc. After I got through with the stamps I asked Mama if I could go down to Mr. Rodgers. She said I could. I went down there and Albert and I played checkers. He would beat me and then I would beat him.

Jan. 9, 1895

I saw the teacher this morning about the Grammar paper. And she marked it 80%.

Turn the page for more diary drama in the diary detective game!

Diary Detective Game

Now that you have met Roy Nasmith and learned about his childhood in Iowa, use the clues he left in his diary to answer the questions below. Your answers will give you a good summary of some of the events and circumstances in Roy's life. Turn to page 30 for the answers.

Detective's Log

❶ List four chores Roy mentioned in his diary.

_____

_____

_____

_____

❷ Name three things Roy did for fun.

_____

_____

_____

❸ Why might a minister's family have a cow?

_____

_____

❹ Why was it important for Roy to keep the fire going in his home?

_____

_____

❺ Why would a case of Scarlet Fever in the Nasmith's neighborhood be important enough to Roy to mention in his diary?

_____

_____

❻ How is your life different than Roy's? How is it the same?

_____

_____

_____

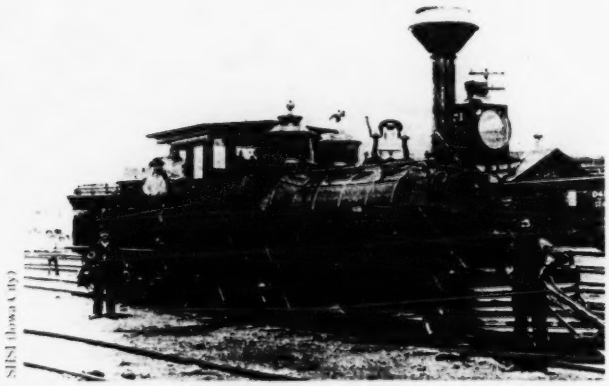
_____

Art by Mary Moye-Rowley

by Amy Ruth

The changing home

From wash boards to washing machines, Iowans have seen many changes in their lives. As families welcomed new technologies and comforts into their homes, they adapted to new ways of living. Here are a few advances in technology that have changed home and family life for Iowans.



SHSI (Iowa City)

The railroad

The country's first railroad appeared in 1831. By the 1870s, trains crossed Iowa from east to west. Railroads between communities allowed families to visit distant relatives. Trains brought ready-made clothes, farm equipment, and home furnishings from the east to sell in stores in the west. Mail delivery from the east to Iowa became more efficient. Railroad companies added special postal cars to trains. They even hired postal clerks to sort mail as the train traveled from one destination to another.

In the early 1900s, trains delivered a new way of shopping. Americans could now order goods from catalogs. Mail-order items came into Iowa's homes and businesses thanks to the railroad. Shopping from home was easy and convenient and mail-order businesses grew around the country.

SHSI (Iowa City)

Cover of a 1902 Sears, Roebuck mail-order catalog.

Telephones

Before Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876, letters and visits were common ways to exchange information. The phone quickly changed how people communicated with the world.

The first telephones in Iowa were installed in cities and towns where homes and businesses were close enough for lines to stretch easily from one building to another.

By the 1920s, many rural families in Iowa also had telephones installed in their homes. Many farm families helped put up the lines themselves.

The telephone united families with distant relatives and friends. People enjoyed talking about family matters and other news without the expense and time of traveling.

The telephone benefited farm families who often lived far from town and resources. A call could quickly summon a doctor for a medical emergency or a neighbor to help with a farm chore.

SHSI (Iowa City)

A 1914 ad in *Successful Farming* magazine urges farm families to buy telephones for their homes.

Canned goods

Canning — the process of sealing food in airtight containers — was invented in France in the early 1800s. By 1878, Iowa had its first cannery in Vinton where workers canned tomatoes and sweet corn. By the turn of the century, commercial canning was widely practiced. Fruits, vegetables, meats, and fish were sealed into tins. The tins were sterilized with very hot water and sold in stores across the country.

Fischer Photography

Canned goods lessened the amount of work involved in feeding one's family. Before canned goods were available, most families grew and processed much of their food. Fruits and vegetables were preserved, dried, or stored in a cold cellar and meat was cured so it would not spoil.

Canned goods allowed families to choose what food to buy and what to produce at home. This meant there was more time to spend on other tasks.

Commercially canned foods were also appealing because they remained unspoiled as long as cans were unopened. These canned goods also retained flavor and vitamins. Cans were easily stored and less space was needed for other food sources.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Indoor plumbing

SHSI (Iowa City)

Before indoor plumbing, families often washed their clothes outside in large tubs.

Before indoor plumbing and central heating, rooms were heated by fireplaces and coal- or wood-burning stoves.

Bathing was done by bringing water in from an outside well or pump, heating it on the stove, and then pouring it into a large tub. Because this was a lengthy process, people bathed once a week or less.

By the turn of the century, indoor plumbing brought water into buildings through pipes. Hot water spilled out from faucets for bathing and washing, and warmed homes through radiators. Flushing toilets meant Iowans no longer had to face cold weather and dark nights when they needed to visit the outhouse.

Indoor plumbing was first installed in town and city houses. Throughout the early 1900s, farm magazines published articles urging farm families to modernize their houses. But even in 1940, most Iowa farms did not have indoor toilets, showers, and bathtubs.

Electricity

Beginning in the 1880s, electricity made its way into American homes. Because it was expensive to run wires from power plants to rural areas, electricity came to towns and cities first and to farms much later.

The most popular electric items were lights. They required less maintenance than kerosene lamps which produced black soot and had to be cleaned regularly. Families could enjoy reading and other leisurely pursuits far into the evening, knowing that they would not have to clean the kerosene lamps the next day.

Electricity brought more than just lights into homes. A variety of appliances, from electric fans to electric heaters made life more comfortable. Beginning in the 1950s, air conditioning cooled the summer heat.

Electric irons and washing machines lightened the heavy workload of women who were responsible for keeping their families clean and clothed. Refrigerators meant families no longer stored their food in cellars and smoke houses where rodents and other pests could get at the supply.

After World War II, many more Iowa farms were wired for electricity. Soon most farm families across the state were enjoying the comforts town families already had. ◆

by Bridgett M. Williams

Homes in history

Historians look at homes for clues about how people in the past worked, played, and thought about their world. They also discover that the size and characteristics of homes, plus the materials used in construction, influence the lifestyles of the families inside. Here are some examples.

Mesquakie homes

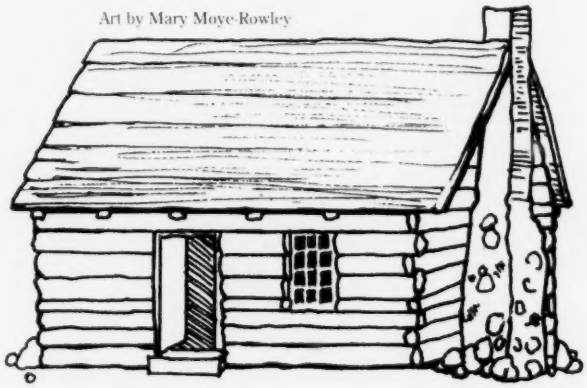
In the early 1800s, Mesquakie women near Dubuque built recyclable houses for their extended families. They lashed together a small frame of poles and then wove bark mats to build the walls and ceiling.

Rain rolled off the tight roof of the larger summer home. Sides were often left open to catch a breeze. Mesquakie kids could play inside and outside at the same time! Small winter homes had thick mat walls and a small fire circle, but most cooking was done outdoors.

The focus of Mesquakie villages was outside the home. The size of houses indicates that most people used them only for shelter, storage, and sleep. Mesquakie people thought that the close quarters and open structure reflected their comfortable relationships with each other. To lock something up would have seemed selfish.

Mesquakie homes were mobile. Families took their houses along when they went hunting or trading. It was also easy to move a village when the firewood ran low or the garbage pit was full.

Art by Mary Moye-Rowley



Log cabins

Iowa's first European-American settlers also built houses with what they found around them. Isaac Kramer was only 6 years old when his family moved to Linn County in 1839, but he recalled years later that his father, Andrew, searched for land with plenty of water and trees. The Kramers chopped down enough

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

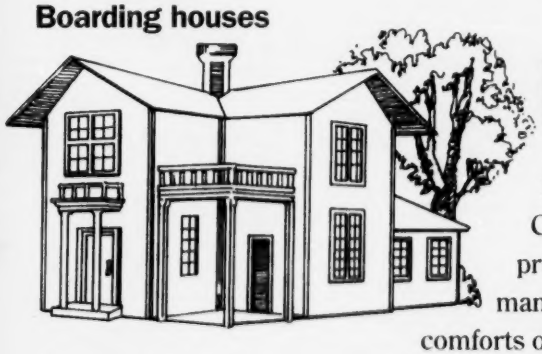
trees to build a small cabin.

Isaac's cabin was dimly lit because the Kramer family used cloth instead of glass in the windows. The family "chinked" the cabin by sticking mud and hay in the cracks between logs, but the cabin was still very cold in the winter — especially when the cow nibbled on the walls!

When the weather was good, everyone tried to get outdoors — the house was smoky and damp inside. At night, the parents slept downstairs on a lumpy feather bed behind a curtain. The Kramer children, meanwhile, would climb a ladder up to their scratchy, straw-filled beds and studied astronomy through cracks in the roof.

Most activities downstairs involved the fireplace. Isaac's mother cooked over the open hearth, but the flickering flames also provided heat and light. Family members and friends gathered around the fire on long winter nights, studying, playing games, and telling ghost stories.

Boarding houses



In 1870, the boarding houses of Creston provided many of the comforts of home to the town's railroad community. Young, unmarried railroaders, known as "boomers," moved wherever their jobs as brakemen, engineers, and firemen took them. The weekly rentals of a boarding house catered to this need for mobility. Boarding house-keepers, usually women with families, prided themselves on providing good food, clean beds, ironed shirts, and a decent moral environment for their guests. Living rooms provided a calm atmosphere where boomers could read magazines, play games, or write letters.

Boarding houses provided a kind of extended family for boomers, and the friendships built over boarding-house tables could last a lifetime.

Split-level ranch

This style home became popular in the 1950s and is often found in the **suburbs**. The front door leads into a large living room downstairs; the dining room and kitchen are also downstairs. A downstairs bathroom safeguards the privacy of the upstairs sleeping quarters — visitors proceed upstairs only on invitation.

Unlike older homes, whose open front porches were both visiting spaces and observation platforms, many new homes have a screened-in patio in the rear of the home. The location and design of the patio suggests that families still like to socialize with each other, but are more interested in preserving privacy than in building neighborly connections. ◆

suburbs — residential area outside cities

Build a Sod house

A family in front of their Osceola County sod house, 1872. Credit: SHSI (Iowa City)

By Mary T. Brauch Petersen

The Homestead Act of 1862 encouraged people to go west. European-American pioneers who settled in northwestern Iowa found that the land offered few trees to build log cabins and frame houses, and lumber was too expensive.

Determined settlers adapted to their environment. They built inexpensive **sod** houses. They cleared and cut the prairie sod into long strips. They laid the strips on top of each other, leaving space for windows and a door. They made roofs out of sticks, boards, and sod. Some sod houses, called dugouts, were dug into the side of a hill.

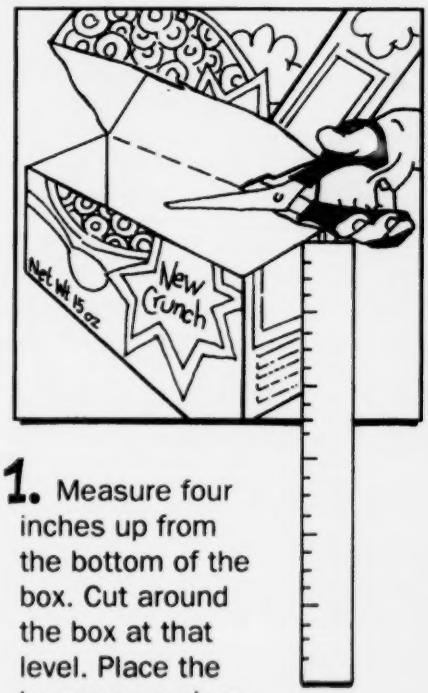
Most sod homes were small and no matter how often families cleaned, the insides were damp and dirty. When it rained and the roof leaked, the floor became muddy. Pioneers shared their "soddies" with rodents, bedbugs, and other creatures.

Families tried to make their temporary homes pleasant. They plastered walls and hung curtains.

Furnishings were sparse. Beds were made from poles and ropes. Boxes, originally used to transport a family's belongings, made tables and chairs. Cast iron stoves provided heat and a place to cook. Since there was little wood on the plains, pioneers burned prairie hay, cow chips, and corn cobs.

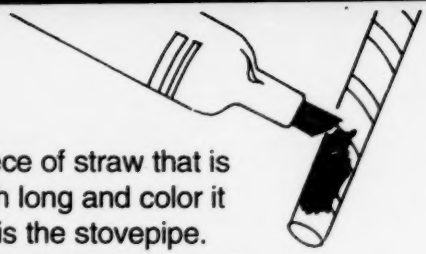
After the railroads came to Iowa, lumber was more affordable and settlers abandoned their soddies for sturdier frame houses.

Follow the directions to make your own model sod house.



1. Measure four inches up from the bottom of the box. Cut around the box at that level. Place the house on a piece of cardboard, open side down. Cut a window and door into your house and a small hole in the roof.

sod — soil with grass and roots 18



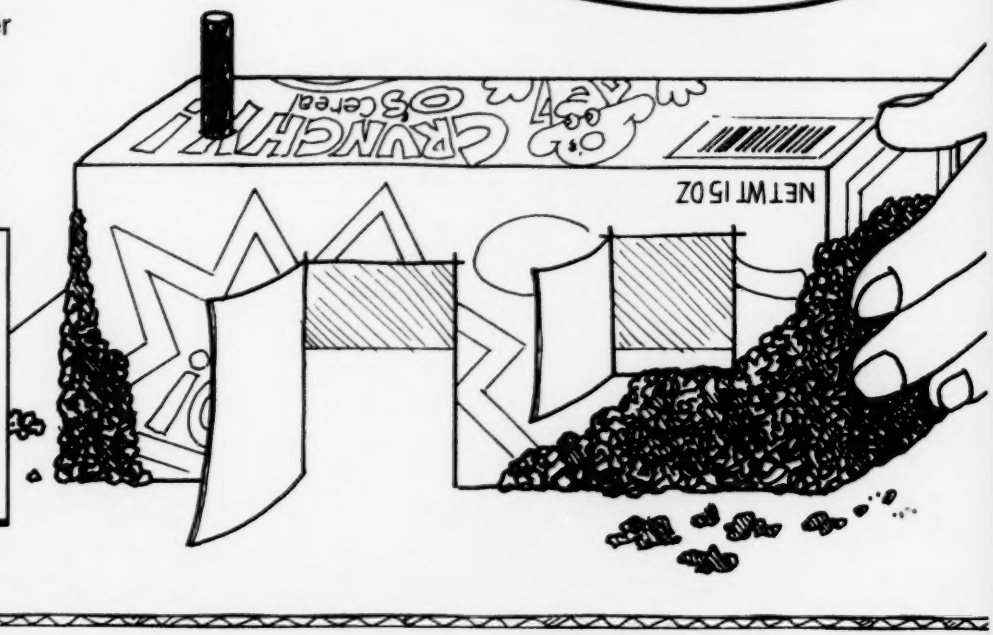
2. Cut a piece of straw that is about 1-inch long and color it black. This is the stovepipe. Place it in the hole on the roof.

3. Color in the door and window with the brown marker.

4. In a bowl, mix dirt and water until you have a slimy mud mixture. If the mixture is too watery, add more dirt. Mix in about one tablespoon of glue.

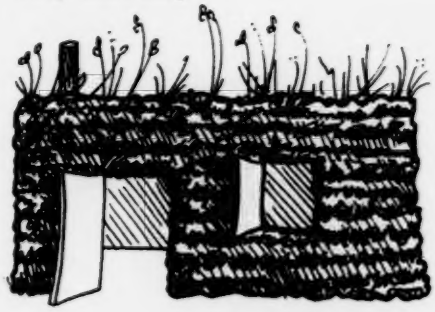
Materials:

Empty cracker or cereal box, ruler, white glue, mixing bowl, 12-inch by 12-inch piece of sturdy cardboard, pencil, dirt, grass seed, scissors, water, drinking straw, black and brown markers



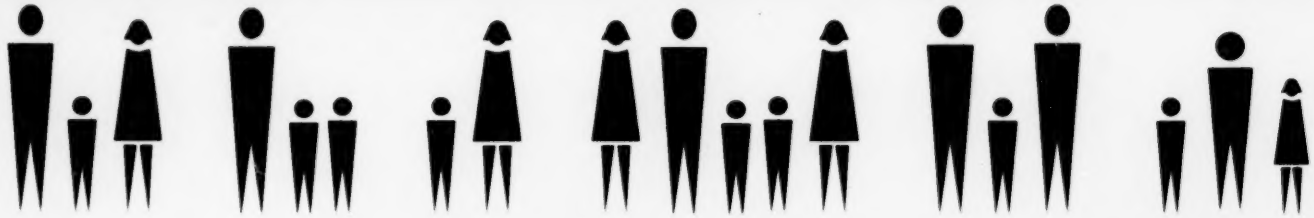
5. Apply mud to the sides of the house, patting it until it stays in place. Pat in glue if the mud slips off the house. Do not weigh the house down with too much water. Continue to apply the mud until the box is covered. Do your walls first, then do your roof. Don't cover your stovepipe.

6. While the mud is still wet, use a pencil point to make the mud look like bricks. Press very carefully.



7. Gently pat some seeds on the roof. Sprinkle lightly with water. Allow your house to dry in a sunny spot and sprinkle your roof lightly several times a day, keeping it moist. Do not let your house dry out. After a few days, your roof will begin to grow. It will look like the early sod houses did.

Art by Mary Moye-Rowley



by Michelle Rubin

Family groups

Many people often think of a traditional American family as a mom, a dad and a few children. In reality, there is no formula for a perfect family. Families come in all sizes, and each family is unique.

Extended families

Grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins make up extended families. Extended-family living has been common throughout Iowa history, beginning with the Native Americans who first called Iowa home.

Native American and European-American families lived in groups and shared labor and resources. Grandparents, aunts, and uncles helped raise children and provided needed labor. Younger family members in return looked after aging relatives.

While she was a young girl in the early 1900s, Genevieve Regan lived near Iowa City with an extended family that included her grandmother.

"Grandma Shay, my father's mother, lived with us when I very young," Regan remembered years later. "She was blind. It was my job in nice weather to take her to the outside toilet. I used to take her the long way around, and also say to her, 'Grandma, here is a big log, pick up your leg and step over it,' which she would do, and of course there was no log at all. I was a grown woman before I realized Grandma was fooling me. She knew how far it was to the toilet, and she also knew there was no log, but she enjoyed my trick and enjoyed tricking me in return."

Extended families sometimes included non-relatives. Schoolteachers and hired farm hands lived with family groups and provided services in exchange for shelter, meals, and a small salary. The bonds of friendship in these situations were sometimes quite strong and could last a lifetime.

Immigrants who traveled from Europe to Iowa often lived with relatives or others in their ethnic group until they could afford their own homes.

Many family groups

There are other kinds of families who don't fit the "traditional" family mold: single-parent families, foster families, adopted families and homeless families all serve their purpose as a group of people who care for one another.

In the early 1950s, a family of five orphans worked hard to keep their farm going after their parents died. The 210-acre farm near Centralia was a big responsibility, but the Miller children — Darlene, 17; Stanley, 16; Joanna, 12; Billy, 7; and Roger, 5 — shared the work so the family could stay together. Stanley handled most of the farm work, while Darlene was in charge of the house and helped with the milking.

Today, in a society geared to **nuclear families**, with improved health care and child care, there are fewer extended families who live together under the same roof. ◆

20

nuclear family — parents and their kids

by Linzee Kull McCray

Passing the time

If your idea of a good time at the end of a long day of school or chores is to play your favorite game, hang out, or work on your favorite hobby, you have something in common with Iowans of the past.

SHSI (Iowa City)

Kids in Iowa's early history found plenty of playthings outside. These children are playing near a river in Iowa Falls, around 1900.

The idea of taking a break from hard work and relaxing with family and friends has always appealed to Iowans.

The Ioway Indians lived in Iowa before European-American settlers came here in the 1830s. When they weren't busy growing crops and raising their families, they played games with sticks and cloth balls. Storytelling was also an important part of the Ioway family's life. Older generations passed on the family history to younger generations.

Early European-American Iowans also worked hard to feed, clothe and build homes for their families. They often lived far from relatives and neighbors, so the chance to get together was a special occasion.

When settlers finished working, they found time to play. Settlers wanting to build a log cabin invited their neighbors to a "raising." After the walls were built everyone shared a meal. Friendly wrestling matches, running races, and other games followed. When the house was finished, there might be a housewarming party and dance to celebrate.

Time for toys

Many toys have been home-made creations. Sticks, stones, leaves, and other outside treasures became imaginary playthings.

At the turn of the century, Iowan Mollie Krutza had two beloved toys, a corncob doll and a doll made of rags. Mollie also loved her set of toy dishes — broken pieces of crockery discarded by her mother.

Louis DeRoin, who grew up on

Mather Collection/SHSI (Iowa City)

Frederick Mather, from Springdale, Iowa, plays with store-bought toys.

SHSI (Iowa City)

This family relaxes on their front lawn, early 1900s.

an Iowa Indian reservation in Kansas in the 1920s, remembered that he and his friends played baseball with a homemade ball.

"We didn't have enough money for a baseball so we used a cloth wrapped up and my mother would sew it together," De Roin told *The Goldfinch*.

When mail order became more common in the early 1900s, middle-class and wealthy Iowa children could order mass-produced toys, but Iowa kids have always used their imaginations to create playthings.

Playmates

Brothers or sisters were often the only playmates of children living in the country. Town kids, however, had neighbors who lived nearby. James L. Hill, a boy who lived in Grinnell in the 1850s, liked to sled, play marbles, and spin tops with his schoolmates. They flew kites with string tied to an old corn cob. Another favorite activity was pitching horseshoes. This was a popular game because horseshoes were easy to find.

More time for fun

Today, Iowa families spend less time on household tasks than in the past. Families today often buy their food at the store rather than growing it at home. They drive cars to town instead of riding horses, and don't have to spend time chopping wood for winter fuel. This gives them more time to play.

Eleven-year-old Sarah Bonefas of Shenandoah is an Iowa kid who likes to play with her friends in her spare time. They go skating at the roller rink and belong to a club called "The Five Musketeers." Club members hold bake sales, mow lawns and baby-sit to raise money for charity. They meet once or twice a month and keep a journal of their activities.

Sarah likes to play with her family too, and together they enjoy a pastime loved by Iowans for years — playing music. Every member of the Bonefas family plays an instrument. Sarah, on oboe, and her sister Mandy, on flute, sometimes play duets. The entire family likes to sing while Sarah's mom, Nancy, accompanies them on the piano.

Like many Iowans, the Bonefas family is busy. Sarah's mom and dad both have jobs, and Sarah and her sister go to school and play in the school band. That's why Sarah enjoys going to the park with her dad to play softball or Frisbee, or gathering with her family at home to play board games or cards.

"I like playing with my family because it's a time to be together," Sarah said. ◆

22

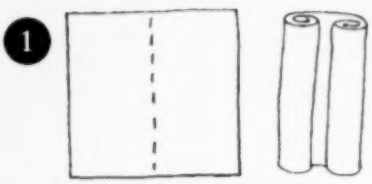
by Diana Star Helmer

Make a handkerchief toy

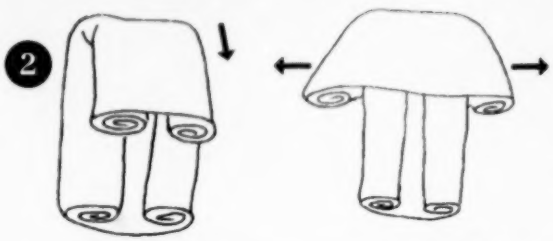
Many pioneer kids who came to Iowa in the 19th century had few store-bought toys and often none at all. They used what they had to make imaginative playthings, like this disappearing toy. One minute it's a toy, the next just a handkerchief.

Materials:

- One handkerchief or a piece of cloth, about 12 inches wide by 12 inches tall.
- One piece of string, 6 inches long.

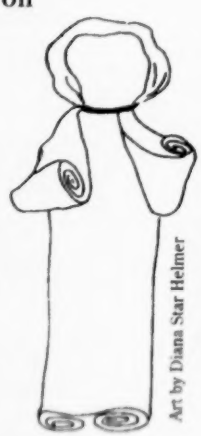


1 Spread out your cloth on a table or on the floor. Roll the edges into the center.



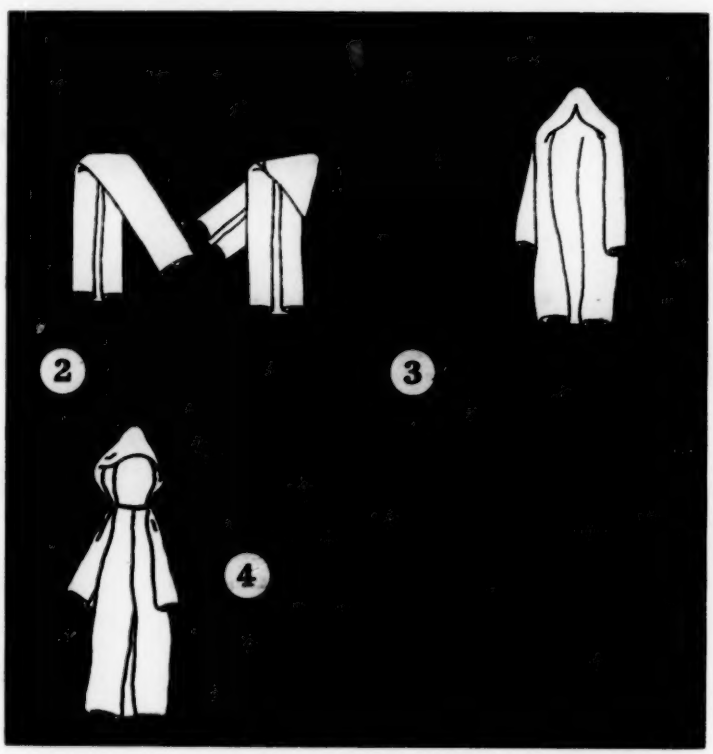
2 Bend the cloth over, extending the top part of the rolls to the sides, as shown above.

3 Fold the rolls up, and then turn the doll over and roll down the arms.



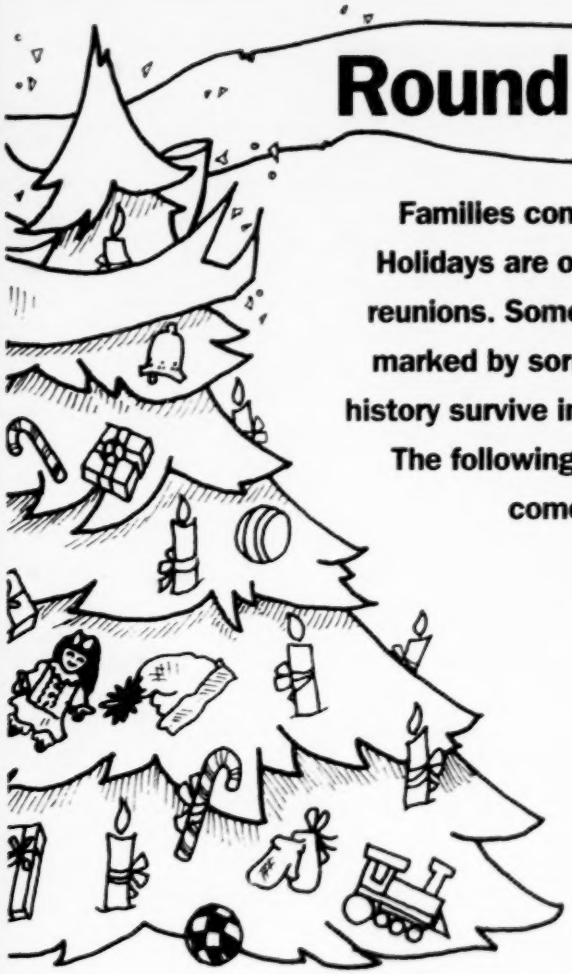
Art by Diana Star Helmer

4 Tie string to form the neck. Shape the doll's head to make it round. Shape the bonnet around the doll's face.



Round the family year

Families come together to celebrate and to mourn. Holidays are often marked by traditions, customs, and reunions. Some family gatherings, such as funerals, are marked by sorrow. Many family celebrations from Iowa history survive in letters, diaries, books, and oral histories. The following firsthand accounts of family festivities come from Iowa's past and present.



1870s Christmas

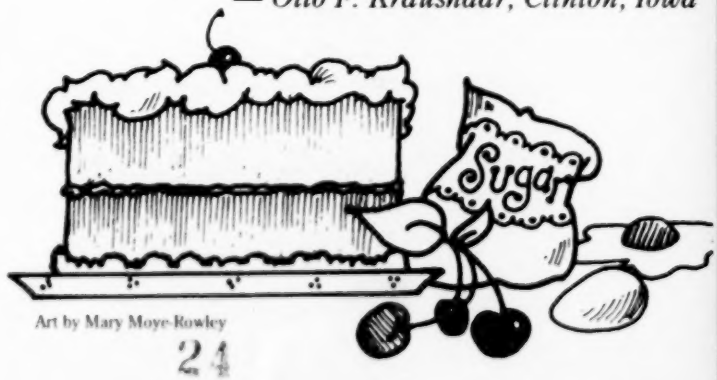
"We went to the Presbyterian Church to see the Christmas tree. We found the church crowded with people old and young and a beautiful tree loaded with gifts stood near the pulpit. It was lighted with numerous tapers and produced a fine effect. Very many were made happy receiving articles from the tree. We enjoyed it well."

— Sarah Jane Kimball, Wyoming, Iowa

1900s Birthday

"The family assembled early at the breakfast table to greet the arrival of the birthday child with the singing of the family's traditional birthday song. On a side-table were some modest birthday gifts that were not to be opened until suppertime, the climax of the celebration. The birthday supper was always something a little special, with hot cocoa and the birthday child's favorite cake which Mother had baked secretly. And after that, the gifts were opened and admired and the recipient received the affectionate embraces and good wishes of each member of the family."

— Otto F. Kraushaar, Clinton, Iowa



Art by Mary Moye-Rowley

1920s
Memorial Day

"All the relations came for Memorial Day and they brought picnics. It was family reunion day. And one of the things I was brought up to do was to make a pilgrimage through the cemetery and everybody that was a relative — you went by their grave and your mother told you about them and you dropped a flower on their grave. That's how we got informed about our families and their backgrounds. We did this every year."

— Marie Havel, Riverside, Iowa

1990s
Kwanzaa

"We light candles each day of Kwanzaa — my grandad and my friend and my mom and my dad and my brother. There are seven candles, black, red, and green. The green represents Africa and the black represents Black people. We celebrate in our living room and the dining room. We have a dinner. We dress up in African clothes and my mom makes outfits for me. The fabric my mom uses is from Africa. The celebration makes me feel happy. It makes me think of Africa and that's where my ancestors came from."

"You have to be good to get gifts. I have to do my homework and practice my violin and be nice to people. I have to do that all the time."

— Alicia Lane, 9, Des Moines, Iowa

1930s
Halloween

"On Halloween night, each member of the family would choose a costume from the dress-up box in the attic. The costume box held a wonderful selection, accumulated from grade school operettas, minstrel shows, and Christmas entertainment. When everyone was appropriately dressed, we had a style show, complete with dramatizations. It was always so much fun that we would go back to the attic to reappear in three or four different costumes before we ran out of ideas."

— Joanne Meusburger, Sac County, Iowa

Courtesy Lane family, Des Moines

The Lane family has celebrated Kwanzaa for five years. Kwanzaa is an African-American holiday beginning December 26. It centers around seven principles, such as faith and creativity. The holiday is based on ancient harvest festivals and began in the 1960s.

SHSI (Iowa City)

Pauline Hollingsworth of Sandyville, Iowa, plays with her dolls and cats. The family dog pulls a wagon, around 1910.

by Linzee Kull McCr

Family's best friends

You might command your family pet to "sit," "roll over," "shake hands," or "beg." But how about "baby-sit?"

In the 1870s and 1880s, Peder Tjernagel's dog, Fido, baby-sat Peder and his younger brother.

Peder, who grew up on a farm near Story City, wrote that his mother trusted Fido to keep her children safe while she worked in the yard. Fido's job was to keep Peder and his brother from getting lost in the tall grass. If Peder's mother lost sight of her children, Fido led them to her.

Fido was typical of pets in early days. Today we enjoy pets because they're soft and cuddly, but in the past, pets were valued first for their ability to work.

Cats kept mice and rats from eating stores of grain needed for food and trade.

In addition to watching children, dogs also acted as door bells and alarm systems. A dog's bark alerted the family to strangers on the property. Dogs also helped herd sheep and cattle.

Many families owned horses to pull farm wagons and plows. Before automobiles, horses provided transportation.

When the work was done, animals often became part of play. Genevieve Regan, who was born on a farm outside of Iowa City in 1892, remembers that when her parents were not around, her brothers hitched four horses to a wagon and played circus.

"They would put us young ones in the wagon, along with maybe a calf and always with Bruno, our big black dog," she recalled later. Her brothers drove the wagon in circles as fast as the horses would go. The game ended when a neighbor reported it to their parents.

Even though they were workers first, pets were appreciated for the companionship they provided. Peder Tjernagel remembered how frightened he was as a schoolboy, when he led cattle two and a half miles from home to graze on open prairie. Peder was lonely and worried about the cattle straying. His dog, Chip, helped keep the cattle together and provided companionship on those long, lonely trips.

With an increase in leisure time, some Iowans had pets just for fun. At the turn of the century, the Iowa Seed Company of Des Moines imported canaries from Germany, parrots from Cuba, and fantail goldfish from Japan, and shipped them on trains throughout the United States and Canada.

Today, not all families can keep pets, but they can still enjoy something Iowans have done for years — feeding birds and squirrels. A feeder near a window, stocked with birdseed, will let you observe animals every day. ◆

Millie K. Frese

Changes for Anna

For Anna and her family, the winter of 1953 brought a great surprise. Little did they know it would change their lives forever.

"William! Anna!" Father's voice boomed in the stairway, echoing in the icy darkness of our bedrooms. The hands of the clock on my bedside table stretched toward 6:00. We should have been in the barn already. There were chores to do, then breakfast and school. When we were little, Father would wake us. But now. . .

Will was 15. I was 12. Old enough, Father said, to get to the barn without being called. Cold nipped at my toes as I crawled from the warm nest of quilts on my bed and got dressed. I pulled on a second pair of wool stockings and ran downstairs.

Jostling our way through the kitchen, Will and I got to the back door at the same time. Mother stood at the stove, pans clattering with the sound of breakfast. The smell of frying bacon made my mouth water. I was hungry, but chores came first.

We pulled on our boots, then swung the door open.

"SCREEECH!" the hinges complained.

"Don't slam the —" Mother began.

BANG! We were outside, running beneath the fading stars. Light spilled from the square panes of glass in the barn windows onto the drifts that swirled below. Father was already at work inside.

"Can you keep a secret?" Will asked, his voice interrupting the crunching sound of our boots in the snow.

"Sure," I replied.

"Cross your heart?"

"Yes! What is it?" I demanded.

"After school I'm going downtown to buy a television set," he said. His words hung in the air with the steamy puffs of our breath. I almost dropped my bucket of table scraps saved for the pigs.

"You're going to WHAT?"

"Shhh," Will hissed as we approached the barn door. Father looked up from his milking as we hurried in. The hand-knit scarf wrapped around my face hid my bewildered expression. Will and Father milked the cows by hand while I fed the pigs and chickens and cleaned out the stalls. A radio crackled with weather reports and market news. But I hardly noticed. All I could think about were my brother's words. A television set? He couldn't mean it.

The school bus picked us up at the end of a half-mile lane.

"Are you really going to buy a television set?" I asked, practically running to keep up with Will's long strides.

"Sure am," he said. "I saved the money from selling my pigs at the fair last summer," he explained. "That along with what I earned working at the Hartmann's place

ought to be more than enough."

"Father will have your hide," I said.

Father didn't take to new ideas. He clung to old ways of doing things as stubborn as winter's grip that year. It was already March and still no sign of thaw. We were the last place in the county to have electricity. We'd be the last family to own a television, too — *if* we ever got one.

"Too expensive," Father scoffed when the subject came up. Television would waste time, he said. We could live without it. Maybe he was afraid that a television set would be the only thing on the farm that he couldn't fix if it broke down.

I didn't think of Will's plan again that day — until I got on the bus to go home. Will wasn't there.

I jumped off at our stop and tore up the lane. Mr. Johnson from the hardware and appliance store honked as his truck passed me going in the opposite direction. I reached the house, breathless, my lungs aching with the cold. School books, coat, hat, and mittens landed in a heap as I hurried through the kitchen.

There it was. In the middle of the living room. A brand new Philco in a blond mahogany cabinet which seemed huge compared to the small screen. Father stood in his denim coveralls, arms crossed across his chest, Mother clutched her dish towel. Will adjusted the wires sticking out the top. He called them "rabbit ears." There was buzzing and humming as he twisted knobs. We caught a glimpse of a picture on the screen. It was all so strange and wonderful, the thought of having something like the movies in our own living room.

"Of course, for a really good picture we'll need an antenna on the roof," Will explained as though he'd worked with television sets all his life.

Father left the room that day saying something about that television being a waste of good money, but it was, after all, William's money to waste. The feeling that the television was an unwelcome intruder slowly wore off, and Mother stopped looking at it as though it had taken the place of her favorite chair.

By springtime, Father took a shine to this new contraption. When the baseball season got underway, he'd take time out on a

Saturday afternoon now and then to watch a game, even when the weather was good enough to be outside mending a fence or doing some other job around the farm.

Our life developed a new rhythm — one that played alongside the familiar cycle of chores and seasons, planting and harvest. It was boxing matches on the television on Friday nights. Saturday evenings were planned with **Lawrence Welk's** eight o'clock time slot in mind. On Sundays after church and dinner, who could miss **Jackie Gleason** bellowing "How sweeeeet it is!" or **Ed Sullivan** introducing his line-up of guests with the promise, "Tonight we have a really big show for you . . ."

We still ate in the dining room. No matter how much we begged, we weren't allowed to eat a meal while we looked at TV. Sometimes,

though, if a good program was coming on, we could stack the supper dishes by the sink and wash them later.

Always we watched with the warning: "Don't sit too close or that thing will ruin your eyesight!" Bedtime was still bedtime, no matter what show might be on, and homework always had to be completed before watching anything.

We didn't seem to notice at first, but the world we knew seemed to expand once the television took its place in the living room. Until then our farm was practically my whole world, providing almost everything we needed to live while demanding all of our time to keep it running.

The Russell H. Schwartz family of Davenport enjoys television in 1949. By February 1950, Iowa had television stations in Davenport and Ames.

Now the outside world came crashing into our living room every night when we turned on the news. Advertisements tempted us with new things to eat and new things to buy that we hadn't really considered before. Sometimes it seemed the people I watched on the screen were looking right at me, and I wondered if they could see me, too.

We tried Welch's Grape Juice from the store, just to see how it compared, Mother said, with the juice she made from grapes grown in the garden. And sometimes, just for fun, we ate cold cereal for breakfast. After all, the television advertisements claimed you couldn't get a better start to your morning.

We put faces with the voices that had entertained us on the radio, and theme songs of our favorite television programs stuck in our heads as we did our chores.

Our roof wasn't the first to sprout an antenna, nor was it the last. But somehow, I was sure, life inside would never quite be the same as it was before Will brought that first television home.◆

TV Talk

Lawrence Welk — television band show host

Ed Sullivan — one of the first variety show hosts

Jackie Gleason – television comedian

Be a photo historian

SHSI (Iowa City)

In the photo above, Mr. and Mrs. J.S. Smith and sons relax in their Wyoming, Iowa home around 1890.

To learn more about the Smith family, study the photo and answer the questions to the right.

❶ What is each family member doing?

❷ What room do you think the Smiths are relaxing in?

❸ Do you think the Smiths were poor, rich, or somewhere in between? Why?

❹ What does this photograph tell you about a holiday the Smiths celebrate?

❺ What can't this photograph tell us about the Smith's home life?

Answers on page 30

30

History makers

Iowa kids share their visions of home and family life in Iowa — 1846 style!

by Alicia Cretin, 10, West Branch

by Brandi Lee, 11, Charter Oak

I am . . .

by Amanda Ross, 12, Iowa City

Answers

(History Mystery, page 3):

I am an almanac. Many of my kind are still published today. Look for me at your school or public library.

(Home Work, page 7):

1. There's no PLACE like home
2. Home, home on the RANGE where the deer and the antelope play
3. Home is where the HEART is
4. Home, SWEET home
5. When Johnny Comes MARCHING Home Again
6. Keep the home FIRES burning
7. Bring home the BACON

(Diary Detective, page 10):

1. Started the fire, cleaned out the barn, swept the front walks, baby-sat.
2. Went sledding, read, played checkers, collected stamps, played in the hayloft, had friends over.
3. A cow provided dairy products for the family.
4. The fire was the primary source of heat for the family and where the meals were prepared.
5. Scarlet Fever was contagious. It was important to stay away from those who had the illness.

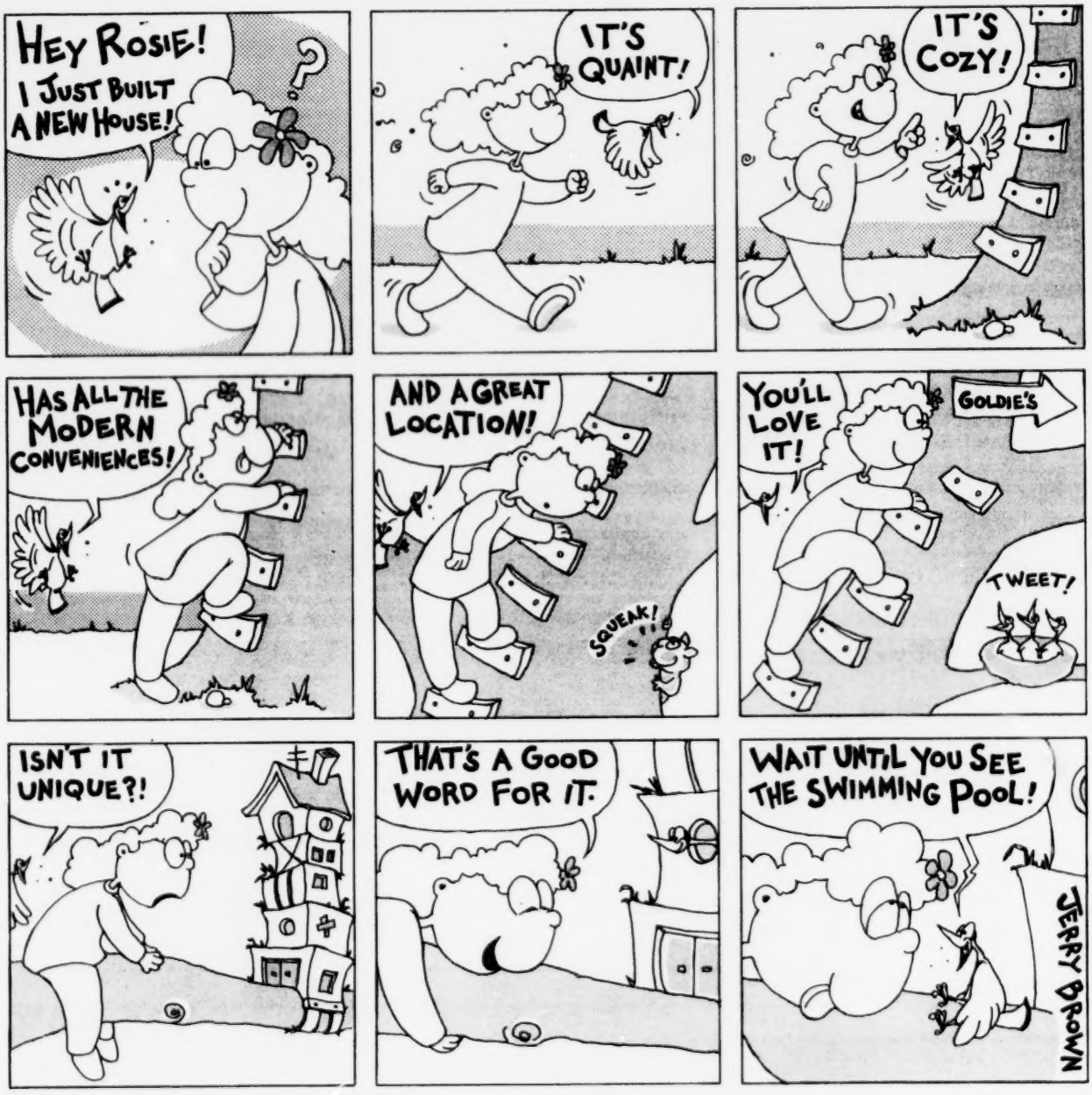
(Photo Historian, page 28):

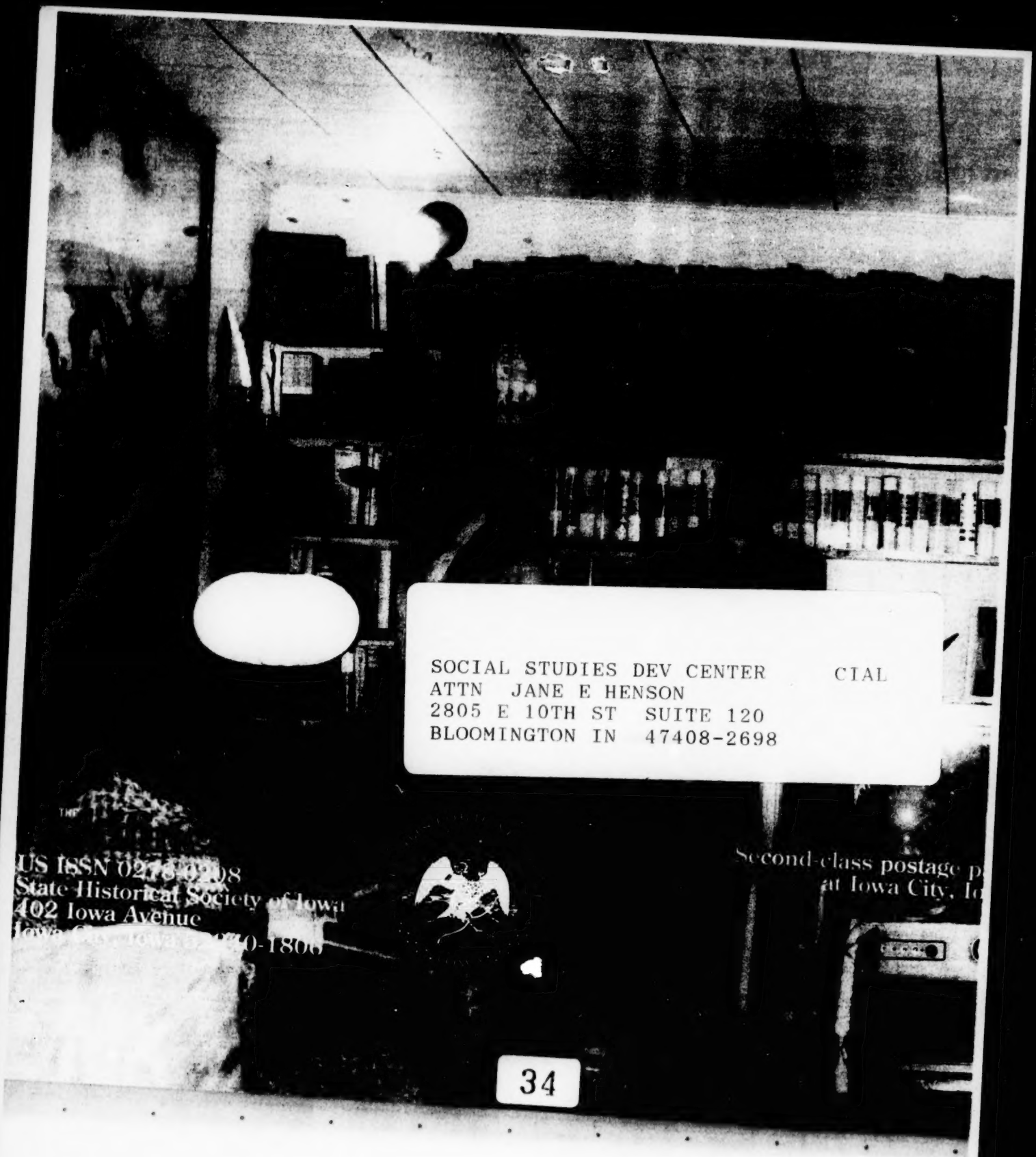
1. Reading, sewing, playing an instrument.
2. The parlor — a room reserved for special occasions.
3. The Smiths were probably a middle-class family. They had enough money for luxuries such as Mr. Smith's watch, books, and musical instruments.
4. The tree by the window implies that the family celebrates Christmas.
5. The photograph can't tell us how family members got along and how they treated each other. It also doesn't tell us about their values or political and social beliefs.

What next?

BE A HISTORY MAKER!

The Roost


HEY ROSIE!
I JUST BUILT A NEW HOUSE!
?
IT'S QUAINT!
IT'S COZY!
HAS ALL THE MODERN CONVENIENCES!
AND A GREAT LOCATION!
SQUEAK!
YOU'LL LOVE IT!
GOLDIE'S
TWEET!
ISN'T IT UNIQUE?!
THAT'S A GOOD WORD FOR IT.
WAIT UNTIL YOU SEE THE SWIMMING POOL!
JERRY BROWN



SOCIAL STUDIES DEV CENTER CIAL
ATTN JANE E HENSON
2805 E 10TH ST SUITE 120
BLOOMINGTON IN 47408-2698

US ISSN 0278-0208
State Historical Society of Iowa
402 Iowa Avenue
Iowa City, Iowa 52240-1806

Second-class postage p
at Iowa City, Io

BEST COPY AVAILABLE